

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 03849 110953Z

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ACTION SS-30

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3085

INFO AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 3849

EXDIS

NICE FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, IS

SUBJ: TREASURY SECRETARY SIMON VISIT - EAST JERUSALEM

REF: STATE 146482; TEL AVIV 3840

1. EVRON (MFA) CALLED EARLY THIS MORNING TO EXPRESS MISGIVINGS ABOUT HOW WE PROPOSE TO HANDLE SECRETARY SIMON'S VISIT TO OLD CITY. HE INITIATED DISCUSSION BY NOTING HE WAS CALLING AFTER HAVING DISCUSSED MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON.

2. EVRON STATED THAT "PUBLIC OPINION" IN ISRAEL WOULD "NOT RPT NOT UNDERSTAND" WHY SECRETARY SIMON WOULD NOT VISIT OLD CITY IN COMPANY OF APPROPRIATE ISRAELIS. IN THIS RESPECT, HE NOTED THAT CHANCELLOR BRANDT AND ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MORO WERE AMONGST THOSE WHO RECENTLY HAD VISITED OLD CITY WITH JERUSALEM MAYOR TEDDY KOLLEK AS TOUR GUIDE. IF WE COULD NOT AGREE TO SOME SIMILAR ARRANGEMENT, EVRON SUGGESTED THAT SIMON NOT RPT NOT VISIT OLD CITY BUT INSTEAD SHOULD VISIT OTHER SIGHTS IN ISRAEL.

3. I ASKED IF EVRON WAS TELLING ME THAT SIMON COULD ONLY VISIT OLD CITY UNDER ISRAELI AUSPICES OR RATHER IF HE WERE BRINGING TO MY ATTENTION A POTENTIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEM. EVRON
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 03849 110953Z

REPLIED THAT IT WAS THE LATTER RATHER THAN THE FORMER. HE WAS

NOT SUGGESTING THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD NECESSARILY RULE OUT A VISIT TO THE OLD CITY, BUT THAT THE NEGATIVE REACTIONS IN ISRAEL WOULD "MAR" THE VISIT. HE NOTED THAT AMB DINITZ WOULD BE HAVING A SIMILAR CONVERSATION IN WASHINGTON (PRESUMABLY WITH ATHERTON) LATER TODAY.

4. I TOLD EVRON I WOULD, OF COURSE, PASS ON HIS COMMENTS BUT THAT I WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT OR POSITION CHANGING.

5. COMMENT: I RECOMMEND THAT WE HOLD THE LINE ON THIS ISSUE AND FORCE THE ISRAELIS TO EITHER AGREE WITH THE PRESENT PROPOSAL OR MAKE THIS AN "EITHER/OR" PROPOSITION. THE ISRAELIS, OF COURSE, ARE WELL AWARE OF OUR REASONS FOR WISHING TO HANDLE THE VISIT IN THE MANNER WE PROPOSED, ALTHOUGH NEITHER EVRON NOR I ADDRESSED THIS SUBJECT.

6. MY GUESS IS THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL ACCEDE TO OUR REQUEST AND WILL SEE TO IT THAT WHATEVER PUBLIC CRITICISM MIGHT RESULT IS KEPT WITHIN BOUNDS. IN ANY EVENT, I CANNOT SEE HOW SUCH CRITICISM COULD HAVE ANY REAL NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF THE VISIT.

7. IF I AM WRONG, AND THE GOI DOES MAKE IT AN "EITHER/OR" PROPOSITION, THEN SECRETARY SIMON WOULD NOT RPT NOT SEE THE OLD CITY AND ANY ONUS FOR "MARRING" THE VISIT WOULD FALL SQUARELY ON THE GOI.
VELIOTES

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